

## Twelve Disciples: Andrew, Philip, Nathanael, and Thomas

Mark 3:18

December 30, 2012

### Introduction

As we look through the Twelve Apostles, we are struck wondering, what kind of people does God use to spread His word? We know that God has disdain for the established religion that holds to tradition over obedience to His word both in truth and in spirit. We know that God uses what the world sees as foolish and choose such foolishness to shame the world (**1 Corinthians 1:27**).

When we look at these men, we need to understand that God's version of qualified people do not match ours. We would not hesitate to disqualify many of the disciples because of their actions and statements. Jesus chooses them and appoints them to represent Him, speaking on His authority. They become the foundation of the Church with Jesus Christ as the cornerstone. Their names are forever on the foundations of the New Jerusalem. Sometimes we feel that God cannot use us, but as we see in the lives of the 12 Apostles (including Paul), there is much to be encouraged that if God can use these twelve very ordinary men, He can certainly use us.

### I. Andrew: The Man Who Introduced People to Jesus

- It is interesting that all personal accounts of the four apostles are from the gospel of John
- Peter's brother (in fact, that is how he is identified in the Gospel of John—Peter's brother)
- Andrew means "manly"
- He is a fisherman from Bethsaida which is near Capernaum on the shores of Galilee
- He is not part of the inner circle of the three—always in the background

**John 1:35-42** The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. <sup>36</sup>When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, "Look, the Lamb of God!" <sup>37</sup>When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. <sup>38</sup>Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, "What do you want?" They said, "Rabbi" (which means Teacher), "where are You staying?" <sup>39</sup>"Come," He replied, "and you will see." So they went and saw where He was staying, and spent that day with Him. It was about the tenth hour. <sup>40</sup>Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. <sup>41</sup>The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, "We have found the Messiah" (that is, the Christ). <sup>42</sup>And he brought him to Jesus.

- Disciple of John the Baptist (with Apostle John)
- Andrew takes Peter to meet with Jesus
- He is not a leader, but he takes people and meet with Jesus

**John 6:1-9** Sometime after this, Jesus crossed to the far shore of the Sea of Galilee (that is, the Sea of Tiberias), <sup>2</sup>and a great crowd of people followed him because they saw the miraculous signs he had performed on the sick. <sup>3</sup>Then Jesus went up on a mountainside and sat down with His disciples. <sup>4</sup>The Jewish Passover Feast was near. <sup>5</sup>When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward Him, He said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?" <sup>6</sup>He asked this only to test him, for He already had in mind what He was going to do. <sup>7</sup>Philip answered Him, "Eight months' wages [200 denarii] would not buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!" <sup>8</sup>Another of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, spoke up, <sup>9</sup>"Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?"

- Andrew has little faith—He does wonder how this few food could feed many

- Introduces the boy to Jesus

**John 12:20-22** Now there were some Greeks among those who went up to worship at the Feast. <sup>21</sup>They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, with a request. "Sir," they said, "we would like to see Jesus." <sup>22</sup>Philip went to tell Andrew; Andrew and Philip in turn told Jesus.

- Philip takes the Gentiles to Andrew before meeting with Jesus
- Sometimes we think that the ones God blesses the most are the ones that are the leaders
- We overlook the fact that Jesus chose Andrew to be the Twelve
- Andrew is not the leader, and he works in the background
- Do you do this? If so! You are in good company!

## II. Philip: The Man By The Numbers

- Not the same Philip as in Acts 6 and 8—that is the deacon Philip
- Means lover of horses—Greek name (we do not know his Jewish name)
- He could be a fisherman like the others
- He is from Bethsaida

**John 1:43-46** The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip, He said to him, "Follow Me." <sup>44</sup>Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida. <sup>45</sup>Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the One Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." <sup>46</sup>"Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?" Nathanael asked. "Come and see," said Philip.

- He knows Nathanael as a student of Scripture
- He uses this method to introduce Nathanael to Jesus
- Interesting way to overcome prejudice—come and see

**Note:** This is how we overcome prejudice—through observations and firsthand experiences. All of our prejudice is from either hearsay or we make such broad, sweeping generalizations that we suppose our own superiority. Make no mistake, prejudice is sinful. Instead of jumping on people's prejudices, we need to be patient and challenge them to experience it first.

**John 6:5-7** When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward Him, He said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?" <sup>6</sup>He asked this only to test him, for He already had in mind what He was going to do. <sup>7</sup>Philip answered Him, "Eight months' wages [200 denarii] would not buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!"

- Philip failed the test—he was concerned about what resources they had for others
- Was looking at the impossible instead of the possible
- Forgotten that Jesus had turned water into wine
- We tend to look at numbers and say that things are impossible—it cannot be done
- This is often the case when the church budget is concerned

**John 12:20-22** Now there were some Greeks among those who went up to worship at the Feast. <sup>21</sup>They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, with a request. "Sir," they said, "we would like to see Jesus." <sup>22</sup>Philip went to tell Andrew; Andrew and Philip in turn told Jesus.

- Philip did not know what to do with the Greeks, so he went to see Andrew

**John 14:7-10** If you really knew Me, you would know My Father as well. From now on, you do know Him and have seen Him." <sup>8</sup>Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us." <sup>9</sup>Jesus answered: "Don't you know Me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen Me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? <sup>10</sup>Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in Me? The words I say to you are not just My own. Rather, it is the Father, living in Me, who is doing His work.

- Philip is slow—he still doesn't get who Jesus is after seeing Him perform miracles year after year
- You see Me—You have seen the Father—I'm of the same essence of the Father (we share the same divine being)
- Philip was a man of limited faith, imperfect understanding

### III. Nathanael: The Man Faithful From The Beginning

- Bartholomew is his last name (son of Talmai)

**John 1:46-51** "Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?" Nathanael asked. "Come and see," said Philip. <sup>47</sup>When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, He said of him, "Here is a true Israelite, in whom there is nothing false." <sup>48</sup>"How do you know me?" Nathanael asked. Jesus answered, "I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you." <sup>49</sup>Then Nathanael declared, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God; You are the King of Israel." <sup>50</sup>Jesus said, "You believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. You shall see greater things than that." <sup>51</sup>He then added, "I tell you the truth, you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."

- He is a student of Scripture
- He is also prejudiced—disdain to people of Nazareth; an emotional response
- However, when Jesus sees him—Nathanael is a true Israelite!

**Romans 2:28-29** A man is not a Jew if he is only one outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical. <sup>29</sup>No, a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a man's praise is not from men, but from God.

**Romans 9:6** It is not as though God's word had failed. For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel.

- He is a sincere, God-seeking Jew
- That statement took Nathanael by surprise
- Jesus makes a statement—that He saw him under the fig tree
- This is an omniscient statement because of Nathanael's response
- Nathanael instantly believe in Jesus as God (this is different from Philip)
- Jesus tells him that everything Jesus does in the future will strengthen his faith!

### IV. Thomas: The Pessimist Who Loved

- Didymus—means twin (either has a twin brother or sister)
- He gets a bad rap for being the “doubting” disciple

**John 11:16** Then Thomas (called Didymus) said to the rest of the disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him."

- Background—Lazarus had been sick and died
- Jesus waited a few days before going to see him
- Disciples were afraid to go back because of the Jews reaction to Jesus' (they wanted to stone Him)
- Thomas was a pessimist—but he was intensely loyal—he'd rather die with Jesus than be without him

**John 14:4-6** You know the way to the place where I am going." <sup>5</sup>Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we don't know where You are going, so how can we know the way?" <sup>6</sup>Jesus answered, "I am the Way and the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."

- Jesus had just finished telling them that He is going to prepare a place for them
- He said that they do indeed know the way to get where He is going—it is through Him
- Thomas seems to panic
- He does not want to be apart from Him

**John 20:24-28** Now Thomas (called Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. <sup>25</sup>So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in His hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe it." <sup>26</sup>A week later His disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" <sup>27</sup>Then He said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see My hands. Reach out your hand and put it into My side. Stop doubting and believe." <sup>28</sup>Thomas said to Him, "My Lord and my God!"

- He was negative—disbelieving
- He loved Jesus much and was grieving much—did not want to be with disciples first time around
- Remember disciples did not believe the women when they said that Jesus had risen
- Notice the gentleness Jesus deals with Thomas' doubt
- Deep love for Christ
- Glorious confession of Christ

## Conclusion

We would have disqualified all of them due to their lack of faith, understanding, by the numbers mentality and doubt. We all have had times when we have had lack of faith. We sometimes do not trust God for what needs to be done. We think that things are impossible when we forget that all things are possible with God. Sometimes we are faced with doubts in different situations.

Despite all these failures and weaknesses, God still uses us for His purpose. What the Apostles experience, we benefit. That is encouraging.